

POST-EVENT SUMMARY REPORT REVISED

Name of Event: ITNAmerica™ National Summit
Date of Event: October 20 & 21
Location of Event: Stonehouse Conference Center, Freeport, Maine
Number of Persons Attending: 80 (estimated)
Sponsoring Organization: ITNAmerica
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PRIORITY AREA #1 Transportation Options for Seniors

Seniors rely on the private automobile as their primary mode of transportation, out of preference and necessity. Roughly 90 percent of personal trips by people over the age of 65 are taken in the automobile¹, either as a driver or a passenger. By contrast, less than two percent of their personal trips are by public transit.² Most seniors lead active lives and are reluctant to give up the freedom and convenience of driving. Their fears of isolation and lack of independence are warranted. Research shows that more than half of non-drivers age 65 and older, or 3.6 million Americans, stay home on any given day partially because they lack transportation options.³ As a result, older non-drivers are less able to participate in their communities. Compared with those who still drive, older non-drivers make:

- 15 percent fewer trips to the doctor;
- 59 percent fewer shopping trips and visits to restaurants; and
- 65 percent fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.⁴

Residential patterns and years of low-density development, or “sprawl,” exacerbate the problem. Three out of four older people live in rural and suburban areas that lack the density for traditional mass transit.⁵ Moving rates among people over 65 are the lowest of any age group, and have been declining for the last thirty years.⁶ Most people will stay in their current homes as they age, and most will need access to a car.

Without acceptable alternatives, many seniors continue to drive themselves, even as their capacity to do so diminishes. Despite their efforts to self-regulate their driving (e.g. avoiding congested areas, avoiding night driving), their safety remains at risk. Older people who continue to drive face the highest fatal crash rate of any age group. By the year 2020, more than 18,000 seniors will die in their cars each year - greater than the number of people of all ages currently dying annually from alcohol related crashes.⁷

Fearing they may jeopardize the safety of others, an estimated 1 million people age 70 or older give up their car keys each year.⁸ For many seniors, however, the decision feels like an “impossible” choice because it often means facing loneliness and on-going dependency. *The gap between driving expectancy and overall life expectancy means that when they turn 70 today’s baby boomers can anticipate being dependent on others to meet their transportation needs for an average of six to ten years.*⁹

The senior mobility problem is one that impacts not just seniors, but their families. *The number of families providing care for aging relatives is increasing - a trend that affects adult children and their employers.* An estimated 22.4 million U.S. households – nearly one in four – are providing care to a family member or friend age 50 or older - typically a parent or grandparent.¹⁰ The average age of care recipients is 75, and over half live in their own home. Caregivers most frequently report arranging transportation (82%),

¹ National Personal Transportation Survey <http://npts.ornl.gov/npts/1995/doc/index.shtml>

² Pucher, J. and Renne, J. (2003).

³ Bailey, L. (Apr 2004).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rosenbloom, S. (1989). Transportation in an Aging Society, Special Report 218, Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences.

⁶ Rosenbloom, S. (Jul 2003). The Mobility Needs of Older Americans: Implications for Transportation Reauthorization. The Brookings Institute Series on Transportation Reform.

⁷ Burkhardt, J., et al (1998).

⁸ Foley, D., et al. (Aug 2002) and email communication 7/6/05.

⁹ Foley, D., et al. (Aug 2002).

¹⁰ National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP (Apr 2004). Caregiving in the U.S. Funded by the MetLife Foundation.

either by driving the care recipient or trying to find services, and grocery shopping (75%). Thirty percent of caregivers provide support to their loved ones over the course of more than five years.

A common assumption is that governments will solve this growing social problem, particularly because the effects are so far-reaching, yet *public resources alone are not sufficient to meet the transportation needs of seniors*. The research community has estimated the cost of meeting the transportation needs of the elderly, based on the following generally accepted assumptions:

- Twenty-five percent of the ≥75 population will need some form of alternative transportation.
- Each ride will cost \$15 on average to deliver.
- People will require four to sixteen trips a week.

Given these assumptions, the aggregate cost of alternative transportation for seniors will be between \$572 billion and \$2.2 trillion by the year 2030.¹¹ At only four rides per week (or two round trips), annual costs will almost double - climbing from \$13 million to over \$25 million.

The primary federal spending programs for seniors, Medicare and Social Security, are expected to run a combined deficit of \$6.6 trillion over the next twenty years.¹² Given the existing budget constraints, government is not likely to make a long-term commitment to subsidizing senior transportation at a level that will meet the growing need for services.

There is an untapped opportunity to better leverage private resources for the benefit of all seniors. *Americans aged 50 and older control 75 percent of the nation's disposable income and own 77 percent of all personal financial assets.*¹³ Seniors as a group are now financially better off than ever before in U.S. history, and have demonstrated a willingness to spend money to improve their quality of life - a trend well-documented by market researchers who study a variety of consumer products and services. Transportation is no exception, with people over age 50 spending \$4,000-\$10,000 per year to provide for their own travel.¹⁴ For seniors 65 years and older, median financial assets (a measure of "liquid" or near cash household wealth) has increased by over 85 percent since 1992.¹⁵ The vast majority of seniors remain optimistic about their financial future, with 83 percent of those aged 75 and older saying they are confident that they will have enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement years.¹⁶

BARRIERS:

Senior Transportation Options

Despite trends that indicate both need and opportunity, transportation alternatives that effectively serve seniors and their families are lacking. The on-going problem is due to a variety of systemic and socio-cultural reasons.

The link between personal mobility and the car is firmly rooted in both community infrastructure and psychology. Historically, Americans have associated cars with freedom and independence - the notion that "I can go anywhere at any time on my terms." At the same time, the development of most American communities - the location of homes, places of work, schools, hospitals, and stores - has been based on the assumption that the vast majority of residents will be driving from one place to the next. While media attention tends to focus on traffic from commuting workers, research reveals that reasons for driving are actually more personal than professional. On average, over two-thirds of a driver's time behind the wheel is spent running errands or going to social or recreational activities.¹⁷ For emotional and practical reasons, driving is critical to being an active participant in society.

As a result, most Americans rely on their cars first and foremost, and regard their other options - public transportation, walking, biking, or getting a ride from someone - as important yet supplementary, using them

¹¹ Freund, K. (2004). *Surviving Without Driving: Policy Options for Safe and Sustainable Transportation for Seniors*. Transportation in an Aging Society: A Decade of Experience, Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Science.

¹² Congressional Budget Office (Nov 2002). *The Impact of Social Security and Medicare on the Federal Budget*. A series of issue summaries from the Congressional Budget Office, No. 6.

¹³ June 2003— AARP CEO William D. Novelli remarks at the UN Business Council Luncheon on June 4, 2003 in New York City, NY.

¹⁴ 2003 Consumer Expenditures Survey.

¹⁵ AARP (2005). *The State of 50+ America*. Available: www.aarp.org.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ National Personal Transportation Survey <http://npts.ornl.gov/npts/1995/doc/index.shtml>

when taking their own car is not feasible or convenient. Seniors who limit or stop their driving have the same emotional connection with their cars, attach the same benefits to driving themselves, and face the same transportation landscape with a few additional options that include:

- public transportation, including para-transit services for those with a disability;
- programs managed by hospitals and/or human service agencies; and
- a variety of volunteer-supported services that provide an additional way to get a ride.

Even if communities can offer these options, seniors still do not have an adequate substitute for driving themselves - a mode of transportation that provides a similar level of autonomy, flexibility and privacy.

Creating a service that fills the gap in the market and mimics the positive attributes of the car requires a focus on:

- *Customer Service* - Seniors are regarded as customers whose preferences and expectations are legitimate and must be addressed; the service is provided on their terms.
- *Resources* - Having a vehicle (and driver) available to the rider at his or her doorstep at any time is inherently labor intensive and complex. The only way to make the service both affordable and sustainable is to maximize resources of all types - people, dollars, goods and services - from any individuals and organizations who have something to gain when seniors are able to participate in community life as they did when they could drive.
- *Technology* - Given the logistics of a car-like service, using technology is essential for managing resources, efficiency and service quality.

At present, the community of senior transportation providers nationwide is fragmented; some organizations work with several different populations, while others offer transportation as one of several services. Table 1 shows the number of possible providers documented by various sources:

Table 1: Estimates of the Number of Senior Transportation Service Providers in the U.S.

Source	Definition	Number of Providers
Supplemental Transportation Programs (STPs) - The Beverly Foundation (www.beverlyfoundation.org)	Community-based organizations and groups that provide transportation services to older adults	400+ (as reported by the providers)
Guidestar (www.guidestar.org)	Senior Centers/Services (P81) with keyword "transportation"	838
2002 Economic Census - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Special needs transportation (485991) - provide passenger transportation to the infirm, elderly or handicapped; includes para-transit, senior citizen, non-emergency medical, handicapped, etc.	2,584
National Center for Charitable Statistics	Number of registered non-profits by purpose or activity - Senior Centers/Services (P81)	4,036
2002 Economic Census - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Services for the elderly and persons with disabilities (624120) - establishments primarily engaged in providing non-residential social assistance services to improve the quality of life for the elderly, persons diagnosed with mental retardation, or persons with disabilities	4,003 for-profit 11,048 non-profit

While many services are well-intentioned and in some cases are effectively providing transportation for a particular subset of the senior population (e.g. seniors with disabilities or seniors with specific medical conditions), they often have one or more of the following characteristics that limit their ability to meet the broader need and be financially viable:

Characteristic

- Restrictions on ride purpose and/or service hours
- Limited or no use of technology to manage the service
- Minimal or no experience with marketing
- Lack of funding diversity or heavy dependence on one funding source (often government)
- Unwilling or unable (according to program or funding guidelines) to charge fares

Resulting Problem

- Service meets only a small portion of the need
- Reduces capacity and variety of services
- Difficulty generating cash, in-kind and volunteer support
- Limits growth and sustainability
- Limits growth and sustainability

Researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the senior transportation community have an opportunity to:

- Challenge a way of thinking common in American society that aging is a condition to be pitied - meaning those who are young tend to “feel sorry for” those who are old
- Provide services that seniors value and genuinely want to use because their needs for reliability, convenience, spontaneity, security and flexibility are recognized and respected;¹⁸
- Leverage different types of public and private resources to serve the most people effectively and efficiently; and
- Connect transportation service providers locally, regionally and nationally.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

Between 1996 and 2002, the Federal Transit Administration, the Transit IDEA program of the Transportation Research Board, AARP, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, together with numerous private philanthropies, funded a series of research projects to develop an economically sustainable, consumer-oriented transportation service that would use private resources, engage volunteers, and allow older people to age in place. The Independent Transportation Network (ITN)[®] model marries the power of information technology and the strength of local support to create an efficient and financially sustainable solution to the transportation needs of seniors and their families. The ITN serves persons age 65 and older and persons of any age with vision impairment. Its innovative transportation service is designed to replicate the comfort, convenience and feelings of independence characteristic of private automobile ownership. Like the private automobile, ITN's transportation service is available 24/7, uses cars only, and gives customers the option to ride alone or with others, as they please. There are no restrictions on ride purpose or limitations on frequency of use. All decisions about use of the service reside with the customer. Users become dues-paying members of the organization at a nominal fee and open personal transportation accounts to pay for their rides. ITN keeps fares reasonable by asking members to pay roughly half the true cost of the rides. Seniors describe ITN as “the next best thing to driving.”

Through the powerful combination of technology and local community support, the ITN model is both scaleable and financially sustainable. ITN relies on a combination of paid and volunteer drivers, integrating them seamlessly into the service - a capability that is unique among senior transportation providers. Through the efficiency of the ITN*Rides!* software system, volunteers who in a typical transportation service could drive one person, can now drive four, five or six, instead. If volunteers are not available, ITN solves this problem with paid drivers, - a practice that ensures the service is reliable and responsive to customer needs. The flagship site, ITN*Portland™* has been operating for ten years and currently provides almost 16,000 door-through-door rides a year for approximately 1,300 seniors.

ITNAmerica, a National Nonprofit Transportation Service for Seniors

In 2003, the Federal Transit Administration funded a plan to rollout the ITN nationally and to present that plan at a national Summit for public comment. In 2004, ITNAmerica was established to create a national,

¹⁸ Coughlin, J. (2001). Transportation and Older Persons: Perceptions and Preferences. AARP: Washington, DC.

non-profit transportation service for America's aging population and in 2005 the Atlantic Philanthropies funded a business plan for the ITNAmerica rollout. In addition to supporting the replication of the Portland model, ITNAmerica will act as a leader in the field of senior mobility, conducting research and crafting public policy to support development of services that will best meet the needs of seniors and their families. The business plan was presented at a national summit in Freeport, Maine, October 20 and 21, 2005. Fifty-five individuals attended, representing numerous national organizations, both public and private, including experts in gerontology, transportation, philanthropy, senior organizations, and labor unions. Representatives from government at the federal and state level participated, and the public was welcomed.

Six draft resolutions were presented to the group for discussion. Participants had an opportunity to revise those resolutions or to draft their own. They settled on 11 resolutions. Those unable to remain for the vote because of travel requirements were given an opportunity to vote by absentee ballot. The top five resolutions appear below in prioritized order:

<i>WHCoA Resolutions from the ITNAmerica Summit October 20 & 21, 2005</i>			
RESOLUTION, AS REVISED BY PARTICIPANTS	VOTE AT THE SUMMIT	ABSENTEE VOTE*	FINAL TALLY
1. Promote policies that remove barriers and that create tax and other incentives to help individuals and their families and caregivers pay for senior transportation.	19	3	22
2. Enhance and support the protection of volunteers' liability when volunteering to drive seniors.	16	4	20
3. Facilitate and support policies and remove barriers for private solutions for senior transportation services nationwide.	16	3	19
4. Use information system technology to coordinate public and private transportation for seniors.	14	3	17
5. Support and enhance research and data collection relevant to the community mobility of older persons.	12	4	16